THE MISSES BRENTHAM.

BY P. A. BLYTH,

Author of "Paul Porter and his Brothers," "Broken Reeds," etc.

"Mr. Stanley, I do not wish to reproach you, and I set you quite free." *p.* 162.

CHAPTER V. *(continued).*

CHARLES STANLEY'S hesitancy passed. Mrs. Brentham was doubtless so far right; if explanation had to be made, now the ice was thus broken, he had better explain right away at once, as best he might. With a stately bow, he said—

"Mrs. Brentham, you have divined the case; but the real truth is, I am myself a poor man, without money, business or standing in the world; and for me to marry a wife poor also would be a simple impossibility."

In his zeal to make good his cause, Charles Stanley un-

consciously made the very worst of himself and his circumstances, and then stood awaiting in silence the outpouring of fierce indignation which instinctively he felt would follow his confession. But the indignation was yet to be repressed. Mrs. Brentham stood and looked at him, looked at him with keen, penetrating eyes; then she spoke, in steady, measured tones—

"Mr. Stanley, I am going to ask you a plain question, and if ye've a bit of honesty left in you, answer me with the truth."

By way of consent, Charles Stanley slightly inclined his head.

"Then tell me the truth. Did you love her, or did you not?"

This direct personal appeal to his feelings sounded to Charles Stanley little better than insult. Assuming as much dignity of manner as he could command—

"Mrs. Brentham," he said, "that is a point upon which I can make no confessions whatever." Then, her fixed gaze never wavering for a moment, with half-impatient tone, he added, "that can make no difference to the matter now. Had I loved Miss Brentham to distraction, I could not have done otherwise than I have done."

But Mrs. Brentham was not satisfied. With the same unwavering eyes and steady tones, she repeated the words—

"I ask you, did you love her, or did you not?"

Charles Stanley's patience at this point fairly gave way.

"Mrs. Brentham, I must decline to answer that question."

The words seemed to act like an electric spark on Mrs. Brentham's suppressed wrath. Again she retreated from him, not this time slowly or thoughtfully, but fell back from him suddenly as though his very near presence was baneful to her. Throwing off the restraint she had exercised, she allowed her indignation full sway. Her eyes blazed and flashed upon him, her figure seemed to dilate with passion.

"Love her!" she cried, her hand accompanying the words with dramatic gesture. "Love her! No, never a thought of love was there in your base, false heart. Love her! love her! No, 'twas the gold, the paltry, perishing pelf you wanted! Love her, no! but you would have married her, and broken her innocent heart with your scornful neglect. What then! 'twas only the gold you wanted. Love! love ought not to be named in the same breath with you."

This first outbreak of demonstrative wrath was not pleasant or soothing to Charles Stanley's already agitated feelings. He hastily began an attempt at self-defence.

"Madam, excuse me ——"

"No, but indeed then I'll not excuse you; and you don't come over me with that kind of talk. And you didn't deceive me either; I've not lived close upon seventy years in this world for nought, and I doubted ye—I doubted ye. Your letter was not a lover's letter, your bearing not a lover's bearing, and when Polly's mother—she wrote to me this morning—said to me, 'Who is this man asking for my darling child? see he is worthy of her,' my heart misgave me again, but I said, 'I'll prove him well, and if it is Polly he wants he shall see it is Polly alone he will have. And I have proved you. Worthy of her! No, no, it is a true heart shall be worthy of Polly."

In the momentary pause that ensued Charles Stanley did not make another attempt at self-justification, and Mrs. Brentham continued—

"Still, could you have confessed to a spark of real love, I'd not have been too hard on ye; but it was the gold, nothing but the gold, you craved, and when you found your wife would be poor you gave her up. Ah, but a little too clever you were for once! I'll tell you now what I'd have told you had you been an honest man! Polly will one day be anything but a poor woman. Ah, perhaps you'd like to alter your plans and take her back, would you? No, no, it's not to such as you we will give our priceless Polly."

"Madam, this is insult."

"Insult, is it; and for a man with *no money, no position, no standing* in the world to ask a woman he does not love to marry him because of her gold—that's not insult, is it?"

Charles Stanley winced as this reiteration of his former statement respecting himself was thus forced back upon him, and perhaps Mrs. Brentham thought her last stroke had fairly felled her enemy, and she was too generous to hit twice a fallen foe, for with one of those quick variations of manner and intonation peculiar to her, and with a sudden thrill of pathos in her voice, she added—

"Ah, and why did ye do it? Couldn't ye be a pleasant friend and companion, but you must pretend the lover when there was no love in your heart? Why did you try to deceive us all? Ah, but had she been a rich woman, as you thought, 'tis yourself you'd most have deceived. What would your gold have done for you? brought you a little comfort and worldly pleasure; but how when the heart-sickness and heavy mind that come to all in their turn, came upon you? What would the gold have done for you then? Would it have put soft arms round your neck, and spoken brave words in your ears, and cheered and comforted you? No, your gold would have been the first to mock and deride you. Ah, you've escaped a terrible snare to-night. You don't know what true love means. Shall I tell you? Perhaps you think it is sordid and earthly—I tell you it is high and heavenly. In the Inspired Volume—though I fear you have made that book but little the rule of your life—it is used as symbol of the highest and holiest union. Ah, I'm an old woman now, but I've not forgotten my early days. I've not forgotten the long life hand in hand together. Ah, and we went sometimes over rough places and into dark depths, and steep hills we climbed; it wasn't always sunny weather and fair travelling, but through it all we went always hand in hand, joy and sorrow we met them together, and our hearts beat true to each other, whilst we put our trust in God above. But you—you'd have taken your gold to your bosom, the gold you'd have treasured in your heart, and your wife—listen—had Polly been rich, the heiress you thought her, I tell you I'd have followed her with a glad heart in her coffin ere she should have been your wife. Your wife—no, she would have been your tool, your stepping-stone to wealth. Gold would have been your wife, gold would have been your comforter; oh, you'd have done yourself and her such grievous wrong—be thankful you've escaped!"

While speaking, Mrs. Brentham had walked to and fro in the room, accompanying her words with declamatory gestures. Charles Stanley felt he would willingly have covered his face from the piercing eyes, or stopped his ears from the thrilling tones. Ever and again he glanced wistfully at the side table by the door, but whether walking or stationary Mrs. Brentham seemed always to intervene between him and the point of egress. He rapidly questioned himself: Was he base as she said? and had he sought to marry a wife for whom he had no love? The answer came with aggravating distinctness. He saw plainly then, if he had never seen it before, that not only had he never loved Polly Brentham, but that there was in him an utter, entire lack of the requisite affection. Still, that surely was no reason why this fierce old Irishwoman should thus menace and denounce him; he would make one more desperate stand on his self-defence.

"Mrs. Brentham, will you allow me a few words?" he said.

"Yes, speak out; that's just what I'd like to hear ye do."

But speaking out was peculiarly distasteful to Charles Stanley. With withering formality, he replied—

"Mrs. Brentham, for the first time, I learn this evening the sinfulness of poverty, and that it is a crime for a poor man to seek a rich woman as his wife."

Doubtless this was meant for a piece of vague though telling sophistry; but Mrs. Brentham was not a woman to be caught by any diplomatic *finesse*.

"Whist, man!" she said; "are ye foolish as well as false? Who said poverty was sinful? Not I. And if poverty must always wed with poverty, poor chances there'll be for some of ye. But let me tell you there's many a rich woman has married a poor man, and has laid her gold at his feet like dross for the love she bore him, and many a rich man has married a poor wife, and they have shared their wealth together right royally and equally, because of the true love between them. Didn't I tell you, had you a spark of real love I would have forborne to censure you? Could you have said, 'Mrs. Brentham, I love your granddaughter, but I cannot marry her thus poor; I will wait and work for her, but marry her now I cannot,' would I have chidden you? No, but 'tis my own right hand I would have given you; but no, love was nothing to you; gold was what you were seeking after, and now you would turn round and tell me I reproach you for being poor. Ah, but you know better," and going closer she bent her gleaming eyes so fully upon him, that instinctively Charles Stanley raised his hand to his brow, as though to shade his eyes from the keenness of the glance fastened on him.

"Ah, hide your face; show a little shame, if there's nothing else you can feel."

"Madam!"—and Charles Stanley looked fixedly, as with resolute intent, at the coveted hat and gloves.

"Ah, look astonished now. I've reasoned with you, but you wouldn't hear reason; you're a man not open to conviction or truth, but you shall listen to just one thing more—ah, hide your face up again; you'll have cause to hide it. What you've done will make every good woman who hears of it look down on you with contempt, with disdain, with scorn, with ——"

At that moment the door softly opened, and the vision Charles Stanley had before dreaded met his gaze. Polly Brentham was quietly entering the room, all unmindful of the scene awaiting her. In her eyes was a softened, happy light. Just for a moment Charles Stanley caught a view of her face with that expression on it; then followed a startled look, and, stopping suddenly, she glanced hastily from one face to the other. Had she arrived a few minutes before, her coming might not have been quite so inopportune; but the slight softening of feeling Mrs. Brentham had manifested had been wholly dispelled by Charles Stanley's last obstinate attempt at making good his cause, and her indignation had only returned with double power. She turned and looked steadily at her granddaughter; then, extending one hand towards her, she said, "Come here, Polly darling; I've something to say to you."

Polly advanced slowly, and Mrs. Brentham, catching her towards her, encircled her with one arm with protective fondness. Polly glanced with a look of startled inquiry towards Charles Stanley.

Mrs. Brentham intercepted the glance. "No, don't look at him, Polly darling, he is base and sordid; don't waste the sweet light of your eyes on him, my jewel, he is not worthy you should look upon him." Then seeing the pained, perplexed expression of her granddaughter's face, holding her at arm's-length, but still keeping a firm grasp of her, she continued, "Polly, you are a good, brave woman, and you have a brave, true heart, and you won't flinch or cry out at what I'm going to say to you; yes, I'll tell it you out before his face, that he may hear how it sounds. Polly, love, he is false to you, cruel and false. He thought you were rich, Polly darling; he mistook you for your cousin and thought he was courting an heiress, and now he finds you've no gold to bring him he gives you up, Polly; he is false-hearted, darling; it was the gold, not you, he wanted."

Charles Stanley started suddenly forward. "Mrs. Brentham, as a gentleman, I cannot ——"

Mrs. Brentham interrupted him quickly. "Whist, Polly darling, he is calling himself a gentleman!" Then, seeing only bewildered dismay and perplexity on the face before her, holding her closer to her and drawing her head down on her shoulder, she said, "Hide your eyes a moment, Polly, and you'll see it all plainly; it is hard for you all at once to understand him false to you, but when you do see it, it's not for him you'll mourn or break your heart."

As though glad of the shelter, Polly allowed her head to rest for a moment on her grandmother's shoulder. Then, as she slowly raised it, Mrs. Brentham saw on the white, pained face, a look of comprehension and sudden resolve.

"Let me go, grandmother," she said, quietly.

"That's right, my darling. You'll give him his due—scorn him as he deserves."

"Don't, grandmother," said Polly, gently, as disengaging herself from Mrs. Brentham's arms, she advanced slowly to Charles Stanley. But there was no scorn in her face, her dark eyes were full of outraged affection, deep, sorrowful reproach. Her gaze never faltered, as, looking at him with those sorrowful eyes, which even that mental anguish could not make cruel or unkind, she said with simple dignity, "Mr. Stanley, I do not wish to reproach you, and I set you quite free."

That was all; but to Charles Stanley there was more scathing rebuke in those few words and the look accompanying them, than in whole volumes of censure and blame. It seemed to him as though she was rising as her cousin had done before that evening to an altitude beyond and above him. He felt a craving such as he had never felt before only to take her hand. But this was not allowed him. Without another word or look she turned and walked quietly away from him and out of the apartment.

Her summing up of the matter and quiet exit for a moment silenced even Mrs. Brentham; and Charles Stanley—perhaps it was cowardly of him, but it seemed at the moment the most natural thing to do—seized the opportunity her silence and temporary calm afforded him, and made a sudden movement past her towards the door. The long-coveted hat and gloves were secured, his hand already held the handle of the door, when Mrs. Brentham uttered again an imperative—"Stop!"

Charles Stanley hesitated. "One moment, and you shall go," said Mrs. Brentham, and Charles Stanley had so long been accustomed to observe the laws of society, which certainly render it incumbent on a gentleman to stop when a lady demands his presence, that he stopped accordingly. Moreover, with the handle of the door in his hand, his exit could be any moment achieved. Mrs. Brentham seemed to comprehend this last point, and spoke rapidly and emphatically. "There is only one thing more I'll say to you. If you have never heard the truth before, remember you have heard it to-night. It is not everyone would have been faithful with

you as I have been. You may go away and call me a hot-headed old Irishwoman; you're welcome. Indeed, I'll be proud you should say it of me. What's the good of shutting your eyes and mincing your words when a dishonourable act is done right before your face? No, I've told you my mind, and I'm glad of it; and if you would keep a light heart and easy mind for the future, be honest and speak true. There, you may go now. It's not such as ye we'd keep against your will."

Ungracious as was the dismissal, Charles Stanley did not need a second bidding. The next moment he had crossed the hall and was outside the house, a keen wind blowing in his face, but he heeded it not—dinnerless, brideless, aimless, he wandered on. For a time he did not know which road he took or whither he went—on, on, in his confusion and agitation of mind, anywhere to escape the memory of the scene he had left. The keen tones of Mrs. Brentham's voice seemed ringing in his ears; the very wind as it whistled past seemed a shrill refrain of her menacing tones; he could have fancied her sharp eyes would suddenly glitter out at him from the hedge-rows. His only idea seemed to be to put distance between him and his accusing memory. On he went, till at length some sudden unfamiliar turn of the road awoke him to the truth that he had been walking a long way in a wrong direction. From that point the confusion of his mind so far abated that he was able to sanely decide upon retracing his steps to Dr. Bowtell's. Still, it was late in the evening before he could prevail upon himself to enter his cousin's house. Only Dr. Bowtell was up when he at last entered, and he went quietly to his room without attempting an interview.

The next morning Charles Stanley astonished his host and hostess by a sudden announcement of leaving them. His reasons, though unexplained, were very urgent; that morning saw his departure from Dr. Bowtell's house. A few days later he had put effectual distance between himself and Mrs. Brentham by once more setting sail and quitting England. *(Continued on page 177.)*

PUSSY.

BY FRANCES RAY.

Pussy is an animal much maligned by many people who fail to consider that some of her faults are due to the education her owners give her rather than to naturally unlovely propensities. In many households where any cruelty shown to a dog or bird by the servants or children would meet with instant reprimand or punishment, the cat is treated with very little consideration, if not with actual unkindness.

The cat being supposed to have nine lives, is often teased by children and worried to a great degree. The grosser forms of cruelty, such as setting a dog on to a cat, pelting the animal with stones, tying a tin pot to its tail, or shooting at it by a bad marksman, who maims and gives torture to his victim ere he actually kills it, are, it is to be hoped, never known in a Christian home; and yet, such is the instinct—due often to the "want of thought" rather than "want of heart"—in boys to treat cats cruelly, that I give the hint to all parents to see that these things are never done by their children. Teach the latter to be kind to all, and that the fun which is found in the sufferings of any animals is sinful, and thus displeasing to God, their Creator.

Next, I would say that the reputation that the cat has of always falling on her feet, though well enough when considered as a protection given by nature, is not to be abused, by experiments which are often made by those who wish to prove the fact by ocular demonstration, and throw the animal down from heights more or less great, the result being to hurt it severely.

In the days of Prince Howell of Wales, who reigned in the early part of the tenth century, there was a law framed by himself for the protection of cats, and large prices were put upon these animals. A kitten, before it could see, cost a penny—a large sum in those days; before it caught its first mouse, twopence, and so on. Anyone who killed a cat belonging to the prince's granary was to forfeit a milch ewe and its lamb, or as much wheat as when poured on the cat suspended with the head touching the floor would form a heap high enough to cover the tip of its tail.

During the summer holidays, when the family is absent and the house shut up, the cat is often either left to starve indoors or turned out into the streets to do so. This is extremely cruel, as the chances are as great of the cat starving to death as of her being hunted, stoned, worried by dogs and heartless people, or put to death for the sake of her skin.

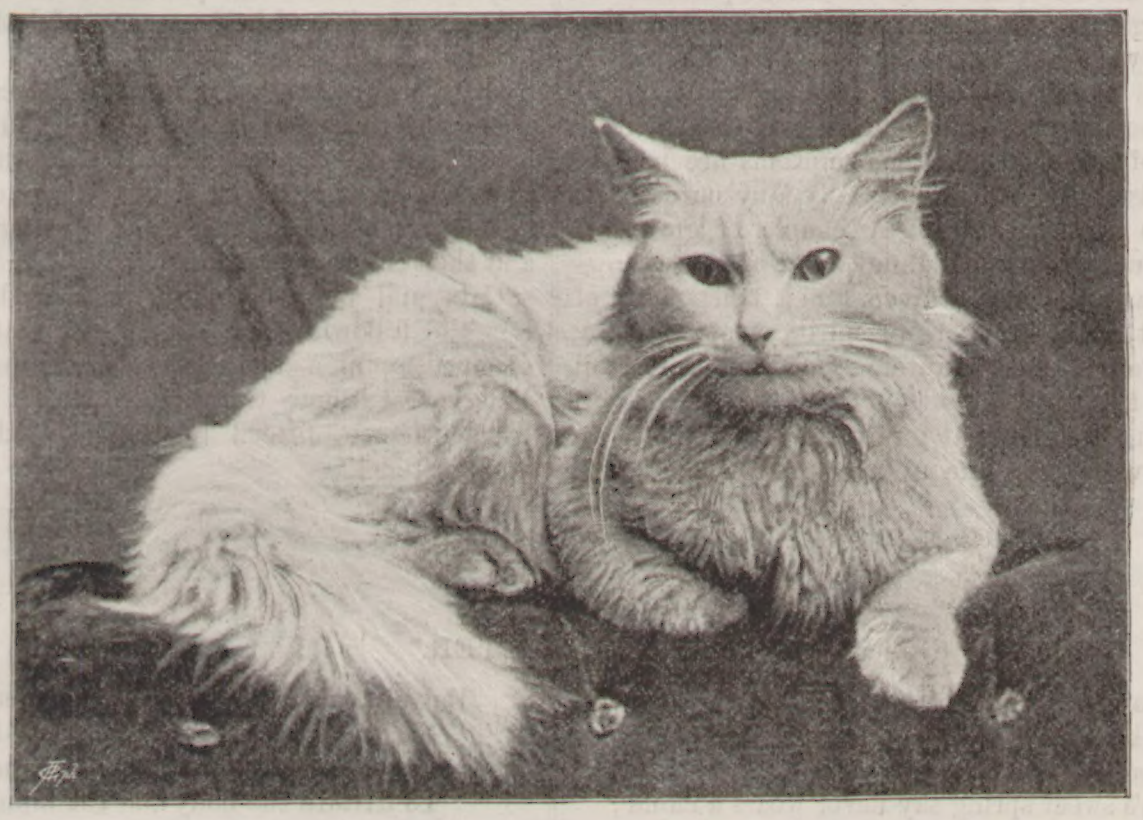
Pussy is usually considered a thief; but if she is punished for her early offences—and a few smart taps on the scene of her depredations will be quite enough—she will learn that "honesty is the best policy." She is often tempted to thieve because of the fallacy believed in by so many people that to starve her makes her a good mouser. It does nothing of the kind, but makes her dishonest and savage. If you want your cat to be a good mouser, feed her regularly and well twice or thrice a day. The result of this, with the kind treatment she should always receive, will conduce to her happiness, and she will be plump and inclined to keep an eye on all rats and mice, with a view to ridding you of their presence. The very fact of having a cat in the house will often scare away these pests, as they discover her proximity by their sense of smell.

Cats are often said to prefer localities to people, and consequently are accused of lack of affection for their owners. This is sometimes true, but not always, there being exceptions to this as to every rule. A writer during the first half of this century says, "I remember a gentleman abusing a cat for attachment to stone and lime rather than to flesh and blood, because, on his changing his residence, puss had practically refused to change hers with him, and had gone back to haunt the purlieus of a neighbouring granary. I enquired whether the family had regularly fed her. 'Oh

dear no,' was the reply; 'she could feed herself very well, and did so on the rats and mice and small birds about the barn.' 'Then, of course,' I rejoined, 'the cat has more reason to love the barn than you. It gave her food; she found none here. She might not be aware that you intended to supply her, and animal instinct prompted her—as, if a dog lived on what he could pick up, it would also prompt him—to return to the spot where his wants had been supplied.'" The plain truth of the matter is, that well-treated and regularly-fed cats have no particular attachment to a place. On the contrary, they attach themselves to the persons kind to them, and who often notice them; so that the cry of want of personal attachment on the part of the feline tribe is very frequently mere slander on the part of the ladies and gentlemen who have neglected, perhaps ill-treated, the creatures, and yet expected them to be as fond as lovers.

cat-life avers that in his own experience, "without any particular training except kind treatment, and often putting the cages with their occupants on the tables for the cat's inspection, the creatures appear to have got so companionable that I have no scruple in leaving some half-dozen birds within the reach of three cats. The animals frequently sit and look at each other; and a green parrot, with a fine talent for biting, has regularly a snap at any whisking tail or incautious paw which may be found within the limits of her very powerful organ."

If you keep several cats, it is a good plan to make their food specially for them. Punctuality is a virtue in feeding cats as in other matters, and it always answers best to feed them at the same hour every day. It is not a good plan to go on giving them the same food daily. The following is a list which may be used turn about, always keeping in mind that



If you want to keep your cat at home at night, feed her late in the evening, and do not allow her out after supper. Many people who are much annoyed by cats at night will shower down blessings upon your head if you pursue this plan. There are complaints often made concerning the ravages cats effect in gardens, and the way they destroy rabbits, pigeons and chickens. As a rule, it is the ill-used, vagrant cat who does these things, not the animal that loves its home and is kindly treated there.

With reference to cats agreeing with other animals, cats and dogs—in spite of the expression "cat and dog life," used to signify quarrelling—do often live in peace together, and many cases are on record about the mutual attachment often evinced between them.

Cats can be cured of their fondness for dining off pet birds, one method being to familiarise the two classes of animals, and get them accustomed to the presence and society of each other. Many cats eat birds because they are hungry, and if you feed Pussy well, she is less likely either to thieve in your larder or your aviary. A well-known student of

meat is a necessity to cats, and should not be left out of their *menu*. Change the latter, however, as much as you can:—

Milk and bread.
Spratt's cat food.
Potatoes and broth or gravy.
Warm tea and milk.
Oatmeal porridge with milk.
Table scraps from dinner wetted with milk.
Lights (these should be boiled an hour and a half).
A little liver boiled for a quarter of an hour.
Cat's meat.

Above all, remember that you should place clean water where Pussy will learn to find it, and let this water be changed every day.

By the way, if you wish to give your cat a liberal education in habits of cleanliness you should begin to train her into these in her kittenhood. Keep a large flower-pot saucer full of clean, dry earth in a corner, and she will soon learn its use until with advanced age she will as a matter of course go outside.

Never let her dish of food be sour or dirty. Pussy believes in cleanliness, and is naturally a clean little animal, never fancying her food if placed on a dish which has not been washed since the previous meal.

If Pussy is long-haired you should groom her regularly with brush and comb.

With reference to the health of Pussy, I will here quote what a medical man, a great authority on cat life, says about it:

"Pussy is subject to a good many complaints.

"The causes of these are as follows, and should be guarded against:—1. Exposure to cold and damp or wet, especially by being left out all night. 2. Going long without food. This renders her liable to ailments of an infectious order. 3. Irregularity in feeding, or starvation. She is obliged in this case to eat offal, and intestinal worms are sure to follow. (N.B.—People who keep cats should see that the entrails of fish, fowls, rabbits, etc., are buried out of the way, as these are a fruitful source of intestinal parasites in both cats and dogs.) 4. Contagion. 5. Infection. 6. Unclean food or dirty dishes.

"An infectious fever, combined with emaciation and vomiting of bilious matter, will sometimes rage for months among the cats of a village, and the symptoms are usually put down to poisoning. There is hardly any cure for it when the cat is once attacked. A couple of grains of calomel may be put on the tongue night and morning, however, a dose or two of castor-oil given, and a teaspoonful of Mindererus' spirit, with five drops of spirits of sweet nitre, given thrice a day in a little water. In giving castor-oil beware of soiling the fur."

The same authority says that for mange a cat should be washed twice a week, and the under parts rubbed with sulphur ointment. For inflammation of the eyes we advise the patient being kept indoors, and the use made of any ordinary eye-wash. If the inflammation be very severe, two or three grains of calomel may be given every night, and milk the only beverage.

Usually cats doctor themselves by eating grass. And if you keep a cat it is always well to cultivate a little grass in your garden for her special benefit should your home be in the town. Naturally enough, in the country grass is within easy range for her to get at.

Never hesitate to get a good veterinary surgeon, or to ask your own doctor, should you feel the cat's disease in any case refuses to yield to your treatment, or if you feel in doubt about it. A cough often leads to an emaciation for which death is the only cure. If, however, you take it in time you can give what is recommended in such cases—Mindererus' spirit, with spirits of sweet nitre, for three days, with one dose of castor-oil on the second day. The cat, says the doctor who prescribes this treatment, should be fed extra well, and half a teaspoonful of glycerine put into her milk twice a day.

Often you feel that you have an old cat whose life is not a pleasure to herself or anyone else, and you hesitate as to how to get rid of it mercifully. Poisoning is very cruel, and so also is drowning. The best thing to do—or get a vet. to do—is to put the cat to sleep with a large dose of morphia, and then chloroform it afterwards.

Cats and old maids are usually bracketed together, but the following statistic shows that to this generally received opinion facts prove exceptions:—At a Crystal Palace Cat Show thirty-two of the prizes were gained by gentlemen, fifteen by married ladies, and only four by spinsters!

"FAR BETTER."

THERE is a lovely land where comes no care,
Where with no heavy load the heart is bowed;
There is a country, oh, how richly fair!
Where life's sweet spring sky never wears a cloud;
And "Oh," I cry, "that I to-day
Were in that 'happy land' so far away!"

For beauteous, sorrowless, is that sweet place,
And never doubt and never sin can come;
The only land where sorrow hath no trace,
Or people realise the name of "home,"
And gather round, a holy throng,
And with each other talk or raise the song.

We have our cottage low or stately pile,
Within whose shade, perhaps, we take our stay,
And call it home, and let it bind us, while
The heart's *true home*, perchance, is far away,
With some beloved one from us gone,
Who made our home: and so we wander on.

But oh! upon that sweeter, happier strand,
No heavy chain of circumstance doth bind;
No sickness chafing with its cold, hard hand,
To irritate the body and the mind;
No poverty, with biting touch,
To keep them from the thing they wish so much!

No, with unwearying, elastic tread,
And, sweeter still, with hearts that ache not, they
Have but to wish, and quick the wish is fed,
And obstacles and distance pass away;
No waiting there, no longing vain!
No cruel poverty, not one of sorrow's train.

Oh! when our hopes and wishes all are riven,
And life seems weary and of little worth,
How do we long for thy sweet home, fair heaven,
Thy rest, sweet contrast to the *un*rest of earth,
And "Had I but the dove's wings," say,
"That I might fly to thee from grief away!"

But wait! not yet, not yet this lot may be,
For patience, though it may be learned so dear,
Yet *must* be learned ere thy sweet joys we see,
And thy true perfect homes for us appear;
O, Saviour, help us ere that rest be won,
To do our part, and say, "Thy will be done."

FAITH CHILTERN.

THE ART OF NURSING.

BY JOSEPHA CRANE,

Author of "Semi-detached," etc., etc.

VI.—Infectious Diseases.

Before touching on the subject of infectious diseases, it may be well to say a few words concerning the prevention of disease taking possession of a house at all.

Of course, it is not possible for everyone to be able to change or choose their house at will; but, if there can be any choice exercised, there are some things needful to be thought of, and which in themselves ward off the chance of the invasion of the enemy. Healthy homes mean prevention, which, the old saying tells us, is "better than cure."

In choice of a house, then, avoid:

1. One where the houses are so closely built together that proper ventilation is impossible.
2. A house that is not quite dry.
3. A house where the water-supply is insufficient and inefficient.
4. A house where the drainage is not quite satisfactory.
5. A house in the neighbourhood of sluggish streams.
6. A house built on made ground, the latter often consisting of decomposed rubbish.
7. A house in a low-lying part where water accumulates easily, and cannot be drained off with ease.

A house, to be healthy, should be on a dry and well-drained soil, the latter composed of either chalk, gravel or sand, and it should be in a neighbourhood that is not too crowded, and where the water-supply is good and drainage first-rate. The aspect of the house should be either south or south-east.

A healthy mode of living, good food, and pure water to drink all ward off disease. Infectious diseases belong to the zymotic class, and this includes scarlet fever, small-pox, measles, typhoid and typhus fevers, cholera, diphtheria, and others. Of course, the degrees of infection vary, small-pox and scarlet fever being the most infectious, and typhoid the least. If sanitary arrangements are very bad, the latter then propagates more freely than it would do under ordinary circumstances. Infectious diseases are communicated from one person to another by touch, or through means of air or water, etc. The class zymotic comprises all diseases that are contagious, epidemic, or endemic.

Many people live in a very foolish dread of infection, and they live in constant terror of "catching something."

Now, if a fever comes to a house, all who can should leave the house, as to do so is simply avoiding needless risk. Those who remain should take every precaution to keep the infection from spreading, and should remember that to keep themselves cheerful and in good health is a sure means to this end.

They should eat good food, not let themselves get run down, and, while using all means in their power, trust in God and keep as calm as possible. Of course, some persons are naturally more nervous than others, but calmness should be aimed at, as terror and the extreme fear that some people encourage only predisposes them to catch whatever is going.

If fever comes, or you suspect its advent, it is better to send for a doctor without delay, and if fever is pronounced, then the patient should be quarantined. A sheet, well sprinkled with a strong solution of Chloralum, Condy's Fluid, Sanitas, Terebene, or any good disinfectant, should be hung outside the door of the sick-room. In choice of a disinfectant, Condy's Fluid and Chloralum have no odour, and that is a great advantage.

Terebene, which is prepared from spirits of turpentine, has a pleasant smell. Chloride of lime and carbolic acid, excellent as they are, have the disadvantage of an extremely strong smell that many people cannot endure.

Dr. George Wilson describes the properties of disinfectants as follows:—

"Disinfectants may be described as agents which are intended to destroy the infective power of so-called disease germs; or, indeed, of any decomposing matter, whether existing in air, water, or other substances, which tend to produce disease. Some of them act as deodorants by arresting decomposition, or as destructives by their direct chemical action, and the most efficient of them are endowed with all these properties, though varying in degrees."

Remember that all the disinfectants you can procure will not make up for deficiency in cleanliness of room and those in it, nor will it supply what good ventilation only can do. Disinfectants are excellent helps to the nurse in keeping the sick-room wholesome, but they cannot take the place of pure air.

Keep a few saucers filled with the disinfectant fluid in different parts of the room, and always pour some into any vessel which has to receive the discharges from a patient before that vessel is used.

Mix the disinfectant with water according to the proportions generally given on the bottle-label, and keep a bottleful of the mixture ready for immediate use. When a vessel has been used by a patient it should be taken out of the room at once, emptied, rinsed out with a disinfectant, and, when brought back to the sick-room, left with a little fluid in it. In cases of cholera or even choleraic diarrhœa, all discharges from the patient should be disinfected immediately and buried in the earth.

The nurse should be most careful to wear a cotton print or what can be easily washed, and on no account to have a dress trailing on the ground, as the latter carries the infection-laden dust about the house. The nurse should avoid swallowing when near a patient suffering from an infectious disease, but she should use her handkerchief. The patient should use small pieces of linen or rag that can be burnt after use, in preference to a pocket-handkerchief.

The bed and body-linen should be placed in a solution of carbolic acid (1-40) for half an hour, or else into boiling water before it is taken out of the room. After that it can be washed in the ordinary way, and then exposed to fresh air. If there is any delay about doing this, do not leave the linen lying about the sick-room; but, if you cannot follow either of the above-named plans, let it lie in plain water.

You should, if you are nursing a patient of this kind, always wash your hands in some disinfectant after you have touched the invalid, and all cups, glasses and spoons should also be washed in a disinfectant. Carbolic acid solution (1-40) is as good as any.

The sick-room should be wiped over with cloths dipped in a disinfectant, and all carpets and curtains should be removed. All the dust taken from the sick-room should be carefully burnt, and everything that can harbour dust should be taken away.

In diphtheria, everything that has been coughed up should be carefully burnt. In convalescence from this disease, the patient should on no account be allowed to sit up in bed unless the doctor has given instructions that he may do so. Fatal syncope might follow if he were allowed to attempt it unless strong enough to do so.

In a short article it is not possible to enumerate the symptoms, characteristics and treatment of all infectious diseases, and such is not my purpose. As I have said before, if fever is apprehended, send for the doctor, and he will give you directions to suit each particular case. I have contented myself with a few general hints which are of use in all infectious diseases, though of course of far greater necessity for use in scarlet fever, small-pox and typhus fevers.

For the disinfection of a sick-room I will quote Dr. Weatherly's directions as being the best I have come across.

"The complete disinfection of the sick-room is only possible when it is no longer inhabited, for the measures that are to be used for this purpose would render it impossible for any person to remain in the room. The room, then, must, in the first place, be thoroughly cleaned and washed with a strong solution of Chloralum (about three or four ounces to a gallon of water), the furniture being dealt with in the same way. The wall-paper should now be removed, and the room thoroughly emptied, all things, previous to their being moved, being properly and thoroughly disinfected. Now, after seeing that doors, windows, and all other openings are able to be closed, sulphurous acid gas should be generated in large quantities by the following plan: You burn sulphur (about one pound of sulphur for every thousand cubic feet of space being the proper quantity) in an iron dish supported over a bucket of water, and by this means you have your sulphurous acid gas generated. During this time all openings in the room must be kept tightly closed, and for some hours after; when, after a few days, you may throw open all doors and windows. Have the ceiling washed and whitened, walls repapered, and the other parts of the room well washed with plenty of water and disinfecting soap."

The bedding should be sent away to be re-made, after being thoroughly disinfected, dry heat of from 240° to 250° Fahrenheit being the best way of doing the latter.

In case of repapering be careful not to put the new paper on the top of the old one. This is known to have been done, and years later, through scratches in the new paper revealing the old one, the infection, which has lain dormant, has awoke and spread.

Should death take place, the body should be washed with a strong solution of carbolic acid or some strong disinfectant, and be enveloped in a sheet dipped in it before being placed in the coffin.

With reference to laying out the dead in ordinary cases, it may be said that this is essentially woman's work, and should be done reverently and carefully.

The body should be laid quite flat, and allowed to lie with straightened limbs for an hour or more. The jaw should be tied up and the eyelids closed. This last can be done by a small weight, such as a coin, or else wet lint. Remove the clothes worn by the patient, and throw a sheet over the body. After an hour or so, wash it carefully and modestly, and then clothe it in some simple garment such as a night-dress, and do not use the hideous shrouds which undertakers delight in.

If there are children in the house, the door should be locked, as a child going in suddenly might receive a shock which would, if of a nervous temperament, haunt it perhaps for a long time. If you take a child to see a dead person, do so before any change has taken place, and before the body is laid in the coffin.

In closing these articles I may say that it is obvious that they are not exhaustive. I have simply wished to name a few things, which, if borne in mind, will render the untrained nurse more useful in the sick-room and contribute somewhat to the comfort of her patient. There are degrees of proficiency in nursing, but that it is an art cannot be denied. All who wish to be good nurses can profit by these hints, and train themselves to be of service, and be competent to obey the doctor in an intelligent manner.

"OUR MAGGIE."

Some years ago, while making a walking tour in the north of England we came to a picturesque village. A fortnight's experience of such little colonies had made us expect to find each one more or less quiet and sleepy.

Half-a-dozen children on their way to or from school, an old woman gossiping with her neighbour at the garden gate, a farmer driving a fat pony, these were, as a rule, the only signs of life we beheld as we tramped through the small villages. To-day, however, it was all different.

Long before we reached Camelford, we passed knots of people, old and young, wearing their Sunday clothes, and carrying posies of old-fashioned flowers. What astonished us still more was that two or three carriages passed us, all evidently bound for the little village. Without a doubt some grand event was to take place in the neighbourhood.

It was in the days of turnpikes, and we asked the old pike-keeper what the fuss was all about. Never shall I forget the old man's look of scornful amazement.

"What! Do you mean to say you don't know what's a-going on up at the village? Well, to be sure! But there, they do say as people who live in big towns never care for nothing but machinery and theatres; but to think of you not knowing what was to happen to-day!"

Here the old man raised his voice and shouted to his wife, who was in the kitchen, and a little hard of hearing into the bargain, that two strangers had come ever so far, and didn't know that it was "our Maggie's wedding-day."

Now, if there is one thing that makes you more insignificant than another, it is to have your shortcomings related in that manner. To make matters worse, the youngsters in the road stood still and gazed at us with wide-open eyes and mouths. Evidently we were curiosities. My companion,

"Inch by inch she moved the block of stone."

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who had readier wit and speech than I, made me a sign, and stepped into the cottage.

"Don't be too hard upon us," he said, cheerily, dropping on a chair. "We are hot and tired, and if you will let us have a couple of bottles of that ginger-beer, you can tell us about your Maggie, and we shall still be in time to go to her wedding."

The old man smiled, and having poured out the ginger-beer and sent his grandson to mind the gate, he unfolded his budget of news.

"To think of your not knowing about our Maggie; and yet they said it was put in all the papers. Not that I care for newspapers myself; they always tell you a lot you know, and a lot you don't want to know, but precious little of what you do want to hear about.

"Well, before you get into the village you will come to a level crossing. We have no station here, and we don't want none, but we couldn't stop them bringing the line just outside the village. There's a pretty little cottage by the gates, with a garden round it, that is as neat as a new pin. That's Maggie White's home. Her father has been signalman at that level crossing for years. As soon as Maggie could walk she used to go with him to wave the flag.

"When Maggie was about fifteen her mother died, and poor White he was so cut up that he seemed to hate seeing anyone, and took to spending all his time in the garden, while Maggie did the signalling for him. There's little enough to do as a rule, you know, about eight or nine trains a-day, that's all.

"Well, at last White trusted it all to Maggie, except that he used to walk along the line before six o'clock every morning to see that there was nothing thrown down on the way by mischievous boys. I suppose engine-drivers are very much the same as other folks, though they be so black, and one of them noticed that a girl always signalled at Camelford. Girl she wasn't, of course, by that time, for she was about eighteen; but I've known her since she was born, and she will always be a girl to me.

"The man who noticed her first was the driver of the express which goes right away from Scotland to London. One day he must needs go and slack off a bit to see what our Maggie was like, and seeing that she was a pretty lass (though she's a deal more good than she's pretty), he takes to waving his hand to her. Then he gets bolder, and throws her a little bunch of flowers. So at last, after about three years of the funniest courtship, they found that they were in love with each other, without so much as knowing their names.

"Stephen (that's the engine-driver), he suddenly appears at the cottage one day, and says quite bold-like to old White, 'I want to marry your daughter, if she will have me. I have a good bit of money put by, and there's a nice cottage waiting for my wife. My mother's in it, and the girl I marry must be willing to be kind to her. That's all I ask, and, please God, we will live happily together.'

"It was the queerest sort of way of asking for a girl, you may think; but then the whole thing was different from other people's love-making. So Maggie, she goes and puts her arms round the great fellow's neck (after he'd asked her, in course), and declares she will make him a good wife, and love his mother. Now, perhaps you think that was the end of it, but it just wasn't, though it ought to have been, only then there wouldn't have been no grand wedding to-day.

"There was another fellow who wanted Maggie, a nasty, drinking sort of fellow, who, because he was the son of the miller, thought himself a good match for anyone. Of course, Maggie would not think of him, for the child knows that it won't do to be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

"Well, as soon as Jack Somerton hears of her engagement to Stephen, he goes and tells her that she shan't never marry him. They say that a woman's wits are sharper than a man's when she chooses to use them; any way, Maggie made up her mind that Jack meant to do some harm to Stephen, so she watched the line more carefully than ever.

"One morning she got up extra early, and went along the line to see if all was right. The express would pass in half an hour. You can just fancy what she felt when, about half a mile on, she saw an enormous block of stone put right on the line. It was fastened, too, by an iron rod put through a hole, and it was just near a sharp bend in the line, so that the engine driver would not see it till he was too near to stop his engine.

"Of course, Maggie knew that this was Jack's work. There was no time to spare to go back to the cottage for her father, so the brave girl set to work to move the stone herself. She got the iron rod out somehow, and then inch by inch she moved the block of stone with it. Before it was quite clear, she heard the puffing of the engine, then she heard the shrill whistle with which her lover warned her off the line, little guessing who she was. She just got the stone clear of the line, and then down she fell. She doesn't know whether she fainted or whether she slipped, but she fell with one foot on the line.

"Stephen says he did not know the least who it was, but he felt a slight jerk. He slacked at the next station, and told them he was afraid there had been an accident, then went on with his train as he was bound to do.

"Poor Maggie was found insensible on the line; the train had passed over her poor foot. That was six months ago, and she is quite well and strong now, and is going to be married to-day to the man she risked her life for. Of course, she is lame, but Stephen says that every step she takes will remind him of her love for him."

The old man wiped his eyes, and so did we, there was something so pathetic in the village heroine's story.

Do you wonder that we hurried on to the church, and were glad that we were in time to add our good wishes and our flowers to those of the people who shouted so heartily, "Long life and happiness to our Maggie!"

E. M. WATERWORTH.

HIS OWN WAY.

A PAGE FOR THE YOUNG.

Bertie Wynne was a remarkably handsome little boy. He had sparkling, merry blue eyes, rosy cheeks, and golden hair which his mother allowed to hang in long curls round his head. He was for the earliest years of his life an only child, and his parents were immensely fond and proud of him. They showed their love by dressing him in beautiful velvet suits—ruby, or purple, or dark green—with deep rich lace falling over his shoulders, that made him look like a little prince, and by giving him all kinds of splendid toys. There was nothing, indeed, too costly for "darling Bertie." Everything he wanted he must have, including his own way.

I wonder if any of you think "Oh, what a happy boy he must have been! How I wish my father and mother were like that!"

In case it be so, I must make haste to tell you that Bertie did not seem happy at all. His parents made the mistake of supposing that a little boy could be made happy and kept happy by the things which he possessed, and they quite forgot that true happiness comes from the *inside*, not the *outside* of one; that a loving, unselfish, and contented heart alone can make us glad and gay.

There were often times when in spite of all his friends' indulgence Bertie could not possibly have entirely his own way; then what crying and screaming and kicking there would be! He would make himself and everybody about him wretched for perhaps a whole hour. As he grew older, these occasions became more frequent, and the unhappiness they caused lasted longer, until it seemed that nearly half Bertie's time was spent in howling about something or other in which his unreasonable little will must needs be crossed; and as a result a deep crease had come between his bright eyes, while his under lip grew pouting out in a disagreeable fashion. He was not now nearly such a pretty boy as God had meant him to be. I am afraid that in time he might even have grown to be quite ugly, notwithstanding his pink cheeks and long curls; but something happened.

Bertie had a very kind auntie, who often came to stay at the house, and one day, when nurse had a holiday and Mr. and Mrs. Wynne were out visiting, Bertie and Aunt Rose were left to keep each other company.

There was a sort of terrace at the back of the house from which a flight of steps led to the garden below. Bertie had been riding his new bicycle horse up and down this terrace, while Aunt Rose stood leaning on the stonework at the top of the steps, reading.

Suddenly a brilliant idea popped into Bertie's head. "Get out of the way, Auntie," he said, for though he looked like a little gentleman, he did not know how to speak like one. "Get out of the way! I'm going to ride him down into the garden."

"Oh, Bertie, you can't!" exclaimed Aunt Rose, horrified at the bare idea. "You might be killed."

"I'm going to, anyhow!" said Bertie, getting off the horse and pulling it to the brink of the steps. "I know I can. Get out of the way, I tell you!"

"But you mustn't!" insisted Aunt Rose. "You would certainly fall. Now, don't be a naughty boy!"

She returned to the book she was reading, and which was very interesting. She never dreamed of what Bertie was going to do, and did not see how the ugly wrinkle on his brow deepened and the angry red rushed all over his fair little face.

Suddenly he ran at her with all his might, and gave her a tremendous push. I don't think that in his passion he really knew what he was doing, but Aunt Rose was quite unprepared for such an onslaught. She lost her balance, and fell headlong down the steps on the stones below.

People said it was a wonder that she had not been killed on the spot, and even Bertie was old enough and sensible enough to turn pale at the thought of that. But she was ill a long, long time.

Bertie was sent away to his grandmother's that the house might be kept quite still, and there he learned to be sorry and ashamed for what he had done. More, he learned that the only way to be truly happy is to obey those who are wiser than ourselves, and be content to only have and do the things we may. He began to understand that it is much better to give up one's own way cheerfully, making the best of things, than to run the risk of terrible trouble by defiantly taking it, or to be crying and miserable half the day.

When Aunt Rose got better, she freely forgave the repentant little boy; but alas! that could not undo the harm, for she was made lame for life.

Bertie is a big boy now, with several brothers and sisters. But whenever he sees Aunt Rose, with her sad limp, he is ashamed afresh; and again, as often before, he asks God to subdue his temper and help him to teach the little ones to be truly happy and good

J. C.

OVER THE CRADLE.

BY JULIA M. COLTON.

So many things for the baby to see,
Look from the window and count them with me,
Beautiful smoke floating up to the sky,
Beautiful clouds sailing joyously by,
Radiant light from away up on high.

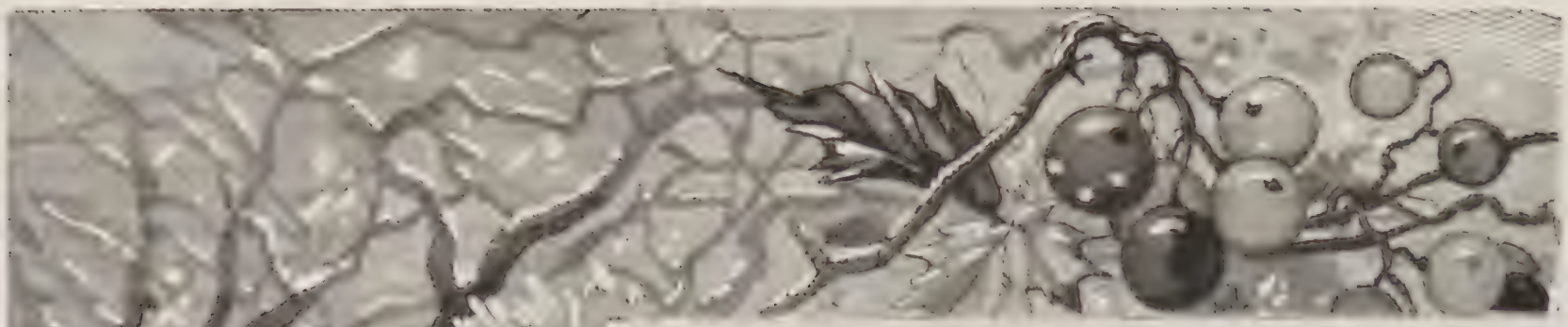
So many things for the baby to hear;
Tender and loving words whispering near,
Piping of birdling, and humming of bee,
Rippling of gladness from flower and tree,
Echoes from Eden from Earth's burden free.

So many things for the baby to feel;
Warmth of the sunshine where light breezes steal;
Softness of wee shoes, and dainty white gown;
Clasp of encircling arms, lips pressing down,
Throb of the loving heart always her own.

Dear baby eyes, with clear depths of repose,
Dear little hands and feet, soft as a rose,
Dear little mouth, with its blossoming smile,
Dear little heart, that beats true all the while,
How does your sweetness my sadness beguile.

Ah, little child! when your babyhood wanes
Years follow on bearing life's certain pains;
Hands will unclasp that have held yours in poise,
Raining of tears will hide sunshine of joys,
Trembling you'll stand in the tumult and noise.

Love cannot shield you from sorrow's surprise,
Through shade and sunshine, each human path lies;
Comfort alone to your heart will draw nigh,
Led by the faith that through clouds can descry
Radiant light from away up on high.



CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

"Christmas-anthems," as a dear old woman used to beautifully miscall them, seem to become more popular year by year.

True, we have not yet arrived at the Japanese custom that every family should grow its special chrysanthemum as a religious or social duty; but the numerous flower-shows held all over the country in honour of this flower prove how greatly its exquisite blossoms, coming as a special blessing during the dullest and darkest months of the year, are appreciated in England.

It is difficult to say which of the many varieties of incurved, Japanese, with their long fringed petals, pompone, or anemone-shaped flowers are the most beautiful: perhaps most people would give the palm to the lovely Japanese, which embraces every shade from purest white to deep maroon, pale lemon tint to golden yellow, pink, old gold, and shaded tints of all sorts, of wonderful beauty and richness.

Chrysanthemums need no heat, and do not need shelter from the frost except during their flowering-time, when a veranda or porch will supply all the warmth they require, if a covering (such as an old sheet) can be suspended over the opening during severe nights of frost.

An amateur who is willing to take the trouble can, therefore, grow these flowers as well a florist with plenty of glass houses: but it is advisable to have a cold frame in which to strike the cuttings. These, which should be selected from the strongest shoots thrown up around the stem of an old plant at this time of year, are best potted at once, in very small pots, which must be kept damp and cool (but not frozen) until the cuttings are rooted. Those who have not a cucumber-frame can strike their cuttings in the window of a room, securing the necessary damp atmosphere by standing the little pots in an old box, and covering the top with a piece of glass.

Air should be gradually given as they begin to grow, and when they are rooted they may be hardened off by opening the window in the daytime, and removing the glass more and more each day.

These plants are impatient of dryness, and must never be allowed to flag for want of water, or they will become infested with green fly.

When the little pots are full of roots the chrysanthemums must be shifted into pots a size larger, and these exchanged again for others, until, about the middle of June, the plants are placed in their flowering pots, which will be from eight to ten inches across.

Each time that the little plants are re-potted they should be "pinched back," *i.e.*, have their shoots cut off to the extent of three or four inches, to induce bushy growth.

The shoots thus removed will make good cuttings if treated in the same manner that has been recommended for the parent plant, and kept in a moist cool atmosphere until they have rooted. In this way a number of smaller plants may be grown, which are very useful for table decoration, and these, if well managed, will find a ready sale as pot-plants when their blossoms appear, if they are not wanted by their cultivator. The last "pinching back" must not be done later than July, after which the plants make their flowering shoots.

The soil used for cuttings must not contain manure, but should be a mixture of turfy loam and coarse sand. The pots must invariably be well drained with crocks, covered, if possible, by fertilising moss or bits of charcoal, and as the plants become stronger and larger more old stable manure may be mixed with the turfy loam, which should form the principal part of the mixture, sharp river or sea sand being used to lighten it.

The pots should stand in a sunny situation in the open air, where they are sheltered from high winds and storms. The shoots are very brittle, and will need careful staking as

they grow; and it is desirable to lift them into the shelter of a shed or house during a high wind.

When the last potting is over, and the plants begin to show their buds, they should be supplied two or three times a week with weak liquid manure. The chemical compounds sold for this purpose are good if used in moderation and alternated with manure made by mixing old stable or fowl manure with lime and soft water; but any over-dose may be very injurious to the plants. Soot-water and soap and water may also be used. These plants appear to like a change of diet, and it is desirable to give it to them, never using liquid manure which is dark in colour, and renewing the soil on the surface of the pots whenever it becomes at all clogged or sodden.

Those who exhibit their chrysanthemums will find it necessary to "disbud" the plants as soon as possible after the buds are visible; in order to concentrate the flowering power on the principal bud of each stalk, all the rest must be pinched off as they appear. The one blossom which is allowed to survive on each spray thus becomes a very large one; but this practice is unnecessary for those who prefer a number of smaller flowers, and do not intend to show their plants.

Green fly is a great enemy to chrysanthemums, and often

The Chrysanthemum Show in the Inner Temple, London.

makes its appearance as soon as they are in bud. Syringing with soap and water, sponging gently with a small bit of sponge and plenty of water, and fumigation with tobacco are the usual remedies; but a regular supply of water to the roots is the best preventive.

If these flowers are placed in a conservatory when it becomes necessary to shelter them, towards the end of September, no artificial heat should be used, or an attack of green fly is sure to follow. A sheltered veranda is preferable to a heated glass-house, as it is only necessary to exclude the frost.

The varieties which blossom early are the best for the amateur; these should be in full beauty by the beginning of October, although the later sorts do not open their buds till Christmas.

I. L. Richmond.

A TALE-BEARER.

Mrs. Charlie Raynor was a good-natured, kind little person, who would not wilfully have wronged her neighbours for the world. She might have been a trifle consequential, and inclined to over-estimate her own dignity and importance, but these are failings to which young, newly-made wives are very prone, so we must not be too hard upon Edith.

Her husband was a plumber, earning very fair wages, and as he did not squander them upon either drink or tobacco, he had been able to provide a very cosy, nicely-furnished home for his bride. And Edith took great pride in it; never was a cottage more spick and span than hers, while she herself was always as "neat as a new pin." Some said she was too "dressy" for the wife of a working man, but in reality Edith spent less upon dress than some of those who criticised and found fault with her.

She thought country life a little dull at first, having been accustomed to a town from childhood, but with Charlie it was quite bearable, and the woman who lived next door was very kind and companionable.

As time passed on, the husband began to think she was a little *too* companionable, and wished she and Edith were not on quite such intimate terms. He had a great horror of gossip, and he grew slightly uneasy when his wife repeated items of news she had heard from Mrs. Salmer.

"I don't want to be uncharitable, my dear," he observed one evening, "but do you think Mrs. Salmer is a good associate for you? I fancy myself she is a bit of a gossip."

"Oh, Charlie, indeed she isn't! You should hear how kindly she speaks of every one."

"Well, I hope I'm mistaken, but she always gives me that impression; she certainly keeps you well versed in the news of the neighbourhood. And I fancy I detected another sign of the gossip—an untidy house."

"Ah, well, see what a large family she has; it would be impossible to keep the place nice. And as for the news, Charlie, well, you see, people tell her things, and she repeats them to me; but I'm sure she wouldn't demean herself by gossiping any more than I should."

The husband was silenced, if not convinced, by this womanly logic, and the intercourse between Edith and Mrs. Salmer continued. Sometimes one neighbour would go into the other's house for a chat, or they would stand at the fence which separated the gardens for a half-hour or an hour at a time. A good deal was "talked over" upon such occasions.

"Edie," said her husband one night, "you haven't invited Miss Gomm here lately; how is that?"

"Oh, I don't know; I don't care for her particularly."

"Why, what a fickle little person you are! When you first saw her you took a most violent and unaccountable fancy to her. What has she done to offend you?"

"Nothing. But you must admit, Charlie dear, she is rather peculiar;—and so reserved! Why, I've never once heard her refer to her former life, have you?"

"I don't remember to have done so, but I don't see what that has to do with it. We know her to be a thoroughly good woman; no one in the parish has done so much good, though she is so quiet and unassuming. See how she would be missed in the Sunday School and Band of Hope!"

"Oh, she *may* be all very well, but I do wonder at her never speaking of herself—it looks to me as though she has something to conceal."

"Nonsense, Edie! What should there be?"

"How can I tell? But she isn't a woman I care to be too intimate with."

"Well, of course you will do as you please; but I think she must have noticed your coldness—and she hasn't many friends in the village."

"Oh, Charlie," put in Edith, irrelevantly, "I had a letter from my cousin Joanna to-day, and she will have a fortnight's holiday before long. I should like to ask her to spend it with us; I suppose you wouldn't mind?"

"Certainly not, dearest; I shall be pleased to see your friends at any time. It will be pleasant for you to have Joanna here; she and you were always chums, weren't you?"

"Yes, we went to school together, and have been almost like sisters. But I haven't seen her now for four years."

Edith set about the preparations for her cousin's visit with great zest. She was delighted at the prospect of meeting her once more, and pleased also at the opportunity of posing as a young matron; she wanted Joanna to see what a model husband she had, and what a snug, comfortable home. In her secret heart she felt a sense of elation because she was the first to be married, for her cousin was four years her senior.

In due course Joanna arrived, and she and Charlie were mutually pleased with each other, while she praised the house and furniture as much as Edie could desire. She was a pleasant, sociable girl, easily entertained, and her visit was a pleasure all round.

The first Sunday, as they were coming from church, she inquired of Edith who the tall, pale lady was who played the harmonium.

"Oh, that is Miss Gomm," was the reply.

"Miss Gomm! What—not Faith Gomm?"

"I am sure I don't know what her Christian name is."

"Well, I thought I must have seen her before, her face seemed so familiar; but I did not think she was Faith Gomm. It is a long time since I last saw her."

"What, did you know her? Where used she to live?" asked Edith, eagerly.

"Oh, it is too long a story to tell you now; I will give it you in detail to-morrow," answered Joanna.

Edith did not allow her cousin to forget her promise; she was quite excited at the prospect of finding out something of Miss Gomm's history, for she and Mrs. Salmer had often discussed her, and were agreed in thinking there must be some mystery attaching to her.

She was not disappointed in Joanna's story; there was sufficient romance to make it interesting, though it was but a too common tale of weakness and disgrace.

"Ah," she said, when she had heard all there was to hear, "I felt sure she wasn't any better than other people. Perhaps she thinks by her Sunday-school teaching, sick visiting, tract distributing, and all the rest of it, to do penance for the past. For my own part I can't understand how she can do it, and I don't think she ought to be allowed to belong to the Church. I never have put much faith in her."

This statement was not quite correct, for before Mrs. Salmer's hints and insinuations had sown suspicion and distrust in her bosom she had been inclined to take very kindly to Miss Gomm. But evil takes root so quickly that she had forgotten her former estimate of Faith's character, and looked upon Joanna's information as confirming that which she and her neighbour had long suspected.

When she repeated the tale to her husband there was a dash of triumph in her tone, and she wound up by saying:

"You know, Charlie, I told you there was some mystery about her."

"But, my dear, these things belong to the past; her present life is irreproachable, and for my part I am sorry your cousin should have raked up an old story. I am sure, though, you won't let it go further; it could do no good, you know, but it might do the poor woman a great deal of harm."

"I am not a gossip," said Edith, a little loftily.

"No; and I hope you never will be," he responded pleasantly, with a loving caress that speedily banished all the wife's ill-temper.

Edith thought she spoke the truth when she said she was no gossip, for she did not recognise that this, like all other habits, grows upon one, and little thought how those chats over the fence were stimulating her curiosity respecting her neighbours' affairs.

She meant to be careful after her husband's warning, but the next time Mrs. Salmer was speaking of Miss Gomm and her singular reserve, she forgot her prudence. It was so pleasant and exciting to be the first to impart a piece of news—and *such* a piece of news, and the story was told, though with many injunctions not to "let it go farther."

Mrs. Salmer was fully as shocked as Edith had expected her to be, although she declared that "it was no more than she had thought all along."

The days went on, and presently Miss Gomm's name was on almost every lip. No one seemed to know exactly how the story had leaked out; possibly it was passed from one to another with injunctions of secrecy until it became public property.

It created quite a sensation in the sleepy village, and Faith Gomm, who had been trying, in an unostentatious manner, to do good, suddenly found herself regarded with aversion and distrust, and presently discovered that the neighbourhood was ringing with the story of her past life.

Edith felt vastly uncomfortable, although she tried not to show it, and in answer to some observation of her husband declared that "it served Miss Gomm right—she had no business to come to the village under false pretences, and ingratiate herself into favour by pretended goodness."

She gave expression to this speech on her way from church one Sunday, and, being excited, she spoke louder than usual, and her words reached Faith, who chanced to be on the other side of the tall hedge.

They cut her to the heart, and she turned wearily towards her home.

From that day she took no part in any active work, and her health gradually failed. At one time she would have been cheered in her sickness by loving visits and sympathy, but she was now shunned by all but the minister. He had been inclined to disbelieve the rumour, but Faith assured him it was true, though she could not understand where it had originated. He replied that it had been traced to Mrs. Charles Raynor, who averred that she had heard it from a friend of hers.

"I should like to see Mrs. Raynor," said Faith, "if she would come. Will you ask her, please? She is too kind to refuse a dying request, I am sure."

Edith was very much surprised when she received Faith's message, but although she shrank from the visit, she complied, though no one knew what it cost her to go and see the woman she had wronged.

But the sick woman had not sent for her to upbraid her. She merely wanted to erase the harsh impression her story, as told by an outsider, had given; she wished Edith to think of her kindly when she should have passed away.

And how different the tale sounded from her lips! Not that she attempted to excuse herself in the least, but she spoke of temptations and circumstances of which Joanna had known nothing, which, though they could not, of course, justify her conduct, made one more pitiful.

Faith was powerless to undo the past, but she sought and obtained pardon of the Christ who "receiveth sinners." Then she wanted to do something to show her love and gratitude to Him, and she came to this village, seeking a sphere of usefulness. She had lived a calm and tranquil, if not a happy life, till the circulation of that story, and then she found how very, very different earthly love and pardon are from the heavenly. Christ had forgiven her freely, fully, but His people looked at her coldly, standing aside with more of the Pharisaic than the Christian spirit, raking up old offences, and sitting in judgment upon them.

Faith spoke gently, but every word pierced Edith's heart. It was she who had set the story afloat which had wrecked Faith's happiness, and branded her with disgrace! Oh, what would she not give if she could but unsay those words! She murmured her sorrow and contrition in a voice broken by sobs, and Faith freely forgave her.

Very soon Faith passed beyond the power of malice or uncharitableness, but this sad experience was a lesson to Edith for life. She never read the injunction given to the Israelites of old, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people," without thinking of it; and she prayed with an earnestness of which she once knew nothing, that a seal might be set on her lips, and that she might have more and more of the charity which "covers a multitude of sins."

L. S.

At evening, home is the best place for a man.—*Goethe.*

The worst man in the world knows a great deal more of what he *ought* to do than the best man in the world practises.—*Dr. A. Maclaren.*

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

In November winter is fairly upon us, and the days are dull and gloomy, as well as short. The evenings, however, are proportionally long, and give famous opportunity for getting through a quantity of work, at all events to those who can see well by artificial light. Old-fashioned folks who have a cup of tea at four o'clock manage to discuss it in the gloaming or between the lights, and can settle down afterwards to a few solid hours of needlework; and what wonders can be performed in those hours by woman's fingers and the aid of their one-eyed servant—the needle.

Anyone who wants to start the winter with a good, substantial dress that will stand plenty of hard wear should secure a six-yard length of the Willwyrwell cloth which only costs 10s. 6d., and while looking very much better, is as tough and everlasting as the old linsey-woolseys. They are warm, strong, and serviceable, and suitable for any woman, be she duchess or dairymaid, keeping in mind the truth that no woman can be more than a lady, and none ought to be less. Longer lengths, of course, can be bought, and not only is it a great advantage to be able to have a new bodice or a new pair of sleeves, but the material left over is most useful for children's dresses, whether they be boys or girls.

Some ladies are so thoughtful that they tell their servants they like to see them in a warm dress in winter instead of the cottons that were formerly thought necessary, and it has recently become customary where a really hardworked housemaid or general servant is required to put on a dark dress before her dirty work is done for the mistress to supply something of the kind. Such a cloth as we have mentioned is admirable for the purpose.

The plainer the make of a warm, substantial dress the better, trimmings only add weight, and give extra trouble in brushing; and the better the seams are finished off, and the buttonholes made, and the whalebones put in, the longer the bodice lasts and looks well. Sleeves should always be cut with a certain amount of fulness in the upper half, stitched in small pleats or gathers to the under-arm piece so as to give free play to the elbows. The colours for the present season are a kind of Peruvian bark brown in several shades, that is to say, a brown with no suspicion of red in it. Navy blue materials are also made with red spots in them, the spots being rather small, less in size than a pea. They are pretty and useful, for a surface diversified with either colour or pattern is less liable to show the dirt than a perfectly plain one. We give a sketch of what is commonly called the pinafore dress when made in two shades, say of brown; but the overdress or pinafore we give is reversible which the ordinary one is not, so that the wearer can have a real pinafore of print, or duster-cloth, or Turkey twill as well as the one which completes her gown. Suppose that the gown itself is dark brown with a lighter shade as pinafore, this latter may be made to look nice half as long again if the other pinafore is put on at certain times, during the morning for instance, or when there is any needlework about that produces threads that cling to everything.

Our second illustration shows a very nice kind of cloak, or at least the upper part of it. It ties into the waist, and being rather full the skirt is ample enough to secure a great deal of warmth. It looks well made in any dark cloth, or in the plaid tweeds that are so much worn, and if the upper part can be lined with silk or Italian cloth it adds both to the warmth and comfort.

There is a new kind of Rational divided skirt made nowwhich is not divided at all in appearance. There is a much gored navy blue cloth skirt extending only to the ankles, and it has a deep hem, but the cloth is not cut at the top of that hem, but formed into a pair of knickerbockers, which do not show below the skirt. This skirt cannot be put on except by putting the feet through the knickerbockers, and it is admirable for women who are obliged to go out in all weathers, and have some distance to walk to or from their occupation. There is no peculiarity at all in the look of the dress, and a person who is clever with needle and scissors can easily make something of the kind. The great point to be remembered is to allow the material nearly twice the length of the ordinary skirt, so that a deep piece can be turned under and machined round to form the part that simulates a hem, and can be pulled down again to manufacture the leggings which, of course, have a good deal of fulness cut away, and are usually gathered into a band, though I fancy smocking might be pressed into the service just as it is for the wrists of blouse sleeves. Smocking is so elastic that after the hand, or in this case the foot, has passed through, it would set in quite close to the ankle, and the little frill formed below would be a distinct improvement.

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